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Alternate Assessment Guidance

Federal law (IDEA 2008) and state law require that all students participate in Indiana's assessment system. For most students with disabilities, this law requires participation in ISTEP+ assessments, with or without accommodations. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, however, the Case Conference Committee may determine that an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) is the most appropriate assessment. The committee must be informed that the decision to participate in an alternate assessment means that the goals describing grade-level proficiency typical of students who intend to receive a high school diploma will not be included in the student's individual education program.

All three of the following **criteria** must be satisfied for a student to be eligible to be assessed on alternate academic achievement standards. In addition, the decision cannot be based on the exclusions provided below.

1. **Presence of a Disability:** There is empirical evidence of a severe disability or a significant cognitive disability that precludes the acquisition of achievement standards necessary to obtain a high school diploma. However, there may be evidence that the student could achieve academic competence at a basic level.
2. **Intensity of Instruction:** Even when provided access to a differentiated general education curriculum and afforded extensive, intensive, pervasive, frequent, and individualized instruction in all settings, the student is unable to derive reasonable educational benefits, acquire, maintain, generalize, and apply academic skills across environments without significant individualized modification to content and performance expectations.
3. **Curricular Outcomes:** The goals and objectives listed in this student's IEP focus on progress within functional achievement indicators and extensions to the Indiana Academic Standards. The student strives to achieve the most basic self-help and communication skills and is seeking opportunities throughout the day to accomplish very individual goals.

EXCLUSIONS:

The CCC's determination that the student will be assessed on alternate achievement standards **cannot be based on** factors such as:

- a. Excessive or extensive absences
- b. Social, cultural or economic differences
- c. The mere existence of an IEP or identification in a specific disability category
- d. A specific special education placement or services
- e. Emotional, behavioral or physical challenges
- f. Anticipated scores on ISTEP+
- g. Concern for accountability calculations

The Indiana Department of Education will utilize these criteria when reviewing or monitoring student education records for the purpose of determining eligibility to be assessed on alternate achievement standards and including alternate assessment data in federal and state accountability determinations.